Chiffon (R) K. 1079 c.1
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THE LIFE and DEATH OF Fair ROSAMOND, CONCUBINE to King HENRY the Second;

Shewing her being poisoned by

Queen ELEANOR.

Printed and Sold in Aldermary Church Yard, London.

This Lady as she grew in years, grew
favour, each year adding to her gra

The Famous History of Fair ROSAMOND.

CHAP. I.

The Family of Fair Rosamond, with a Description of her Person.

THere ſprung from the antient and moſt noble houſe of the Cliffords, a damſel, named Roſamond, daughter to the Lord Walter Clifford. Her beauty was couched under her name. She was Nature's maſter-piece, and one of the faireſt Roſes that ever flouriſhed upon the earth.

This Lady as ſhe grew in years, grew in favour, each year adding to her grea

perfections. And having obtained unto ſome years, Fame carried her praiſe into foreign places, whereby ſhe was not only the common diſcourſe of our nation, but the table-talk of remote countries.

One thing, as being the ſhorteſt way of giving the reader a ſketch of this great beauty, and which very much tended to the ruin of Roſamond, we muſt not omit. Once when King Henry and a courtier of his were together, the King taking an opportunity to commend with more than ordinary heat, one of the court, the courtier told him, He thought his Majeſty praiſed her more than her perfections did deſerve, but that he had a neice whoſe beauty was peerleſs; and then began to talk of her as the moſt beautiful of the creation, telling the King, That both her eyes ſparkled like two twin ſtars, her forehead was like a haven of chryſtal, her eye-brows ſhun like jet, a ſprig of roſes and lillies were in her cheeks ſo mixed, that nature before never made ſo fair a mixture of the pureſt white and red.

To brief, he told the King ſhe was nature's maſter piece, who when ſhe had

made her, cry'd, A lucky hit, and threw away the mold, that none ſo lovely and charming might come after, to dazzle the eyes of mankind, and to wound their hearts.

The King hearing this relation, could but ſmile with joy, and demanded of him in what corner of the earth ſo great a beauty could be hid? At this, the courtier perceiving he had gone too far, and the King began to be enamoured at the bare report, would have drawn his words in again, telling the King he had made this report only to ſet out a perfect beauty to the life.—But the King perceiving by the coldneſs of his reply, there was more than ordinary in it, ordered him immediately to ſpeak the truth. And the courtier fearing the King's diſpleaſure he plainly ſaid, There is a Lady, daughter to Lord Walter Clifford, of whom many noble perſons have been enamoured, and have ſought her in marriage, but have been denied, on account of her tender years.

It was not long before the king reſolved to take a tour to her father's houſe, and on coming there he was welcomed by the

Lady, who fearing what his deſign was, ordered their daughter not to come into his preſence. But the King, finding ſhe was at home, demanded to ſee her vowing he would not dine till he had. So that all her excuſes of illneſs availed nothing. Then ſhe was ordered to put on her beſt apparel, and come down, that ſhe might pay her duty unto the King; which ſhe did in the moſt courtly manner, her bluſhes, if poſſible, adding to her beauty, ſo tha[illegible]he firſt ſight ſhe appeared in his eyes like a bright angel; whereupon he eagerly ſaluted her, and dinner being placed upon the table, he commanded ſhe ſhould ſit down, cauſing her to be placed directly over againſt him, on whoſe pretty eyes he ſo long gazed, that he forgot ſometimes to eat.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The King gains the Love of Fair Roſamond.

THE King having been ſo very highly entertained by Roſamond's father, had ſeveral opportunities of diſcourſing her private with the charming virgin, whom he ſo much won upon by preſents of rich Jewels, and other coſtly things, that he raiſed an ambition in her tender breaſt, that before was a ſtranger to it, and often proteſted, that was his Queen to die, he would raiſe her to the dignity of the crown.

He alſo beſtowed his gold liberally on the woman who had the care of her education, which ſo blinded her, and prevailed over her conſcience, that ſhe promiſed him to do all her was in her power to forward his wi[illegible] happineſs. And ſo taking leave of his beloved Roſamond with many loving kiſſes, he for that time departed.

The King immediately returned to his palace, but could never be at reſt, for the violent paſſion which ſtill reigned in his breaſt. He could not ſleep of nights, nor attend his councils of days.

At length he reſolved to write to her, let his fate be whatever it might, and ſo accordingly he wrote a letter to Fair Roſamond, in which he told her it was ſhe who was his guardian angel, that he held her dearer than his crown, and ſaid, his ſtay from her ſhould not be long, promiſing to ſet her in a glittering ſphere, and concluding with an earneſt deſire of her ſending him a line of comfort from her dear hand.

The letter ſomewhat ſurpriſed our heroine, that ſhe could not tell how to proceed; however, ſhe reſolved to ſhew it her governeſs, who no ſooner ſaw it than ſhe inwardly rejoiced, and ſmiling at Roſamond, adviſed her to ſend the King a favourable anſwer, and not let too much modeſty hinder her from being miſtreſs to ſo great a King. This made her bluſh ſtruggling hard with herſelf, until at laſt this crafty matron uſed ſo many preſſing arguments, that ſhe conſented to return

the King in anſwer, telling him, That ſhe was aſtoniſhed at receiving his letter; but as to her being in a glittering ſphere, it was a thing which ſhe never had wiſhed for; not daring to give herſelf the liberty to think what his majeſty might mean by it; only aſſuring him, in whatever was agreeable to the rules of modeſty, ſhe was his moſt obedient ſervant.

The governeis having got this letter from the young Lady, ſent it to the King, who upon receiving it, kiſſed it a hundred and a hundred times, reſolving not to be long without the enjoyment of this fair creature, which however he found ſome difficulty in effecting, as will appear in the next chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The King, after much Difficulty gets Roſamond to Court.

IT happened that the Lady Clifford, going into her daughter's cloſet, there eſpied the King's letter to Roſamond, at which, being very much ſurpriſed, ſhe called her daughter, and asked her the meaning of that letter? Roſamond was as much ſurpriſed at the queſtion, and not knowing what anſwer to make, made her bluſhes paſs for one. — Her mother took the letter to her father, who was much diſturbed thereat, and both came together to her chamber, and upbraided her with being a concubine to the King. Roſamond at this kneeling down upon her knees, ſolemnly proteſted, that ſhe was ſtill a pure and unblemiſhed virgin, and had never given herſelf up to the King's embraces, or thoſe of any other man.

This ſolemn proteſtation ſomewhat appeaſed her father's anger, who for ſatiſ-

faction of his mind, desired her to tell the whole truth, which she did, from the first courtship of the King, to the receiving of the letter. When they had heard her story, they both advised her against yielding to the King's embraces, and told her that for her own security, she had better go to a kinsman of his at Cornwall, and reside some time.

To this Rosamond agreeing, they sent her and her governess to Cornwall, where they thought she would be safe. But all their endeavours were in vain; for the governess being largely bribed by King Henry, was all this while the grand intriguer in this love affair, who sent the King a full account of all things that had passed, and how far they were sent to take the air.

King Henry having this intelligence, resolved to have her out of their hands, and thereupon sent for her uncle, who being come, he told him he had a piece of service to command him in, which was to go to his kinsman's in Cornwall, and use his best endeavours to bring Rosamond to the court, without her parents knowledge.

Her uncle was ſomewhat ſurpriſed at the king's demand, but the conſideration of loſing the great offices he held under the King, made him undertake the ungrateful ſervice, which was impoſed upon him. Accordingly coming to where the King had directed him, he made as if he had called by chance, being come about other buſineſs. After ſome diſcourſe he asked her if ſhe would go up to court, to which ſhe ſeeming not much unwilling, without any more ado, he provided a chariot for her Journey, and attended by her governeſs, brought her to court, and put her in ſome private lodging appointed for her reception.

Her uncle having acquainting the King that ſhe was come, and how he had diſpoſed of her, he came that night to viſit her; and now ſeeing that beauty in its full bloom, which before was but blooming, he was ſurpriſed both with wonder and amazment.

After ſome love diſcourſe had paſſed between them, the King took his leave, telling her, He would not diſturb her that night, on account of the fatigue of her journey, but that he would viſit her again

ſhortly. So charging her uncle to have a particular regard to her, and ſee that ſhe wanted nothing, he departed.

Her governeſs did all ſhe could to perſwade her to yield to the King's embraces, but Roſamond ſeemed averſe to it, her father's words ſtill running in her mind. The King having viſited Roſamond two or three times, began to grow impatient, and thought it was high time to have ſome cloſe converſation with her, and if poſſible, to make her ſubmit to his embraces. To this end he came one evening, and told her, He perceived that ſhe had not the value for him which he thought ſhe had.

Roſamond not underſtanding the kings meaning, proteſted, That ſo great a value ſhe had for him, that was ſhe to ſee him wounded, and her heart's blood would do him any good, ſhe would freely reſign it for him. To this the King, fetching a ſigh, anſwered, Ah, my Roſamond ſince you will force me to ſpeak, Know it is your beauty that hath wounded me, love calls for love, neither can my wounds be cured without enjoyment.

Roſamond was extremely ſurpriſed at what the King had ſaid, aud begged him to aſk her life, or any thing that was in her power to give, ſo it was not her honour. The King was mightily ſurpriſed to hear ſuch words from her, as thinking to have made an eaſy conqueſt; and was as much in love with her virtue, as he was before with her beauty.

The King. having left Roſamond went to her Governeſs, and told her what a repulſe he met with from Roſamond inſtead of the enjoyment he expected. She as one that was hardened in wickedneſs, anſwered, If your Majeſty would be adviſed by me, I could put you in a way to ſucceed, which is, you ſhould come into my chamber at night, and I'll convey you to Roſamond when ſhe is aſleep.—At this contrivance the King was much pleaſed, and accordingly was with her at the time appointed, and was conveyed into Roſamond's chamber.

She was aſleep when he firſt went to-bed, but laying cloſer to her than her governeſs uſed to do, ſhe waked of herſelf, and then the King diſcovered himſelf.

It is not eaſy to imagine how great was the ſurpriſe that Roſamond was in at this diſcovery. and fain would ſhe have got out of bed, but the King would not let her. She made many efforts to get away, but finding them all in vain, ſhe at laſt yielded herſelf to the King's embraces, which pleaſed him ſo well, that before morning he pleaſed her too.

For a time theſe lovers often met. and enjoyed their wanton dalliances ; but the King had been wont to ſhew the ſame kindneſs to others, who finding themſelves neglected for this peerleſs beauty, ſoon ſpread abroad the King's familiarity with Roſamond.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

The King builds a Bower for Rosamond, and soon after leaves her.

THE envious Queen Eleanor, when she perceived neither kind words nor threats would wean the King's love from his new mistress, set her engines to work to fright her from his arms, and several letters were dropt in her lodgings threatening her destruction, which were shewed to the King; whereupon he appointed a strong guard to wait upon her at home and abroad. — And to remove her farther from the Queen's sight, he caused a fine palace to be built at Woodstock, in Oxfordshire, which was so very ingeniously contrived, that none could enter into the apartment where Rosamond generally resided, without the help of a clew of silver thread.

This more vexed the enraged Queen, wherefore she consulted with her sons, [illegible] then grown; how to be revenged [illegible] and after many things proposed, it was

agreed that prince Edward should go and join the French, to raise war against his father in Normandy, which if he affected speedily, would draw the King to the aid of his subjects, and so in his absence the Queen might the better effect the ruin of Rosamond.

Prince Richard immediately went to the task, which when the King heard, he raised an army, resolved to pass the sea, and put an end to those tumults. Rosamond when she heard this dismal news, threw herself on the ground, tearing her hair, and lamenting of her hard fortune; in which condition the King found her, when he came to bid her farewel; and when she saw him, she fell on his neck, crying, Ah! my dearest Prince, is there no remedy to unbind to us, that we must so soon part? and as my presaging soul foreboded, for the last time in this world. Oh! take me with you, for there is no safety for me in this world, but in your royal [illegible]

She would have proceeded, but the King stopped her mouth with many tender kisses, and interrupting her, said, My fairest Rose, you are not fit to brook the

toils of war, ladies cannot endure the fatigues and hardships of camps, peace and delightful pleasures are most agreeable to their temper. He then called to him Sir Thomas her uncle, to whom he said, I commit this inestimable Jewel to your care, and command you on your life that none be permitted to see her till I return. And my fair mistress, I shall often write to you, and expect your answers. — But Rosamond, continued the King, I think there is something so mournful in this our parting, that I could hang for ever on thy neck: but I have far to go, and must hasten.—And so have I, said Rosamond, if death is far.— And so in tears they parted.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

On the King's Departure, the Queen finds means to enter the Bower and murder Fair Roſamond.

FAir, but diſconſolate Roſamond, as ſoon as the King was out of ſight, with a diſmal ear-piercing cry, threw herſelf down upon the couch, and fell into a ſwoon; from which, when her attendants recovered her, ſhe ſo often fainted, that her maids had much ado to keep life in her: but when ſhe recovered ſhe gave herſelf up to deep ſorrow and melancholy, refuſing to be comforted for ſeveral weeks, her ſleep ſtill going from her, and when ſhe ſlumbered a little, ſhe ſtarted crying, O ſave me, ſave me, here is the Queen! ſhe has got me at laſt! and with the fright ſhe waked, feared and terrified with her dreams. — Nor was it without reaſon that Roſamond was thus afflicted in her mind, for all this while Queen Eleanor was plotting her deſtruction: To effect which, ſhe firſt propoſed it to ſome favourites, whom ſhe raiſed

from a low condition, to a high promotion; but they ſtarted at it, as a thing full of danger, ſeeing if it was known, their lives would ſurely be forfeited and loſt at the King's return, unleſs they fled the land, and left all behind them.

This ſo enraged the jealous Queen, that ſhe reviled them with reproaches of cowardice and ingratitude, for the many favours ſhe had heaped upon them, which with ſome perſuations and large offers, prevailed ſo far with ſome of her domeſticks, that they reſolved to ſtand by her in any dangerous attempt.

It being ſummer time, ſhe undertook a progreſs, as ſhe gave it out for health, attended by the conſpirators, appointing a ſet time, her companions to hide themſelves in a cave that was near the bower, and at the ſound of the horn to do as ſhe required; at the ſame time giving out of them directions to dreſs like a poſt-man, and carry a letter as if it came from the King, and when he had delivered it to blow his horn.

This cunning device took, for the too credulous Knight ſeeing only the poſt-man, came without the gate, when upon the

ſignal given thoſe in ambuſh, they ruſhed upon him. — He fought valiantly with them, and was ſecouded by their guards, but being overpowered by numbers, he was ſlain, with many of the guards belonging to both parties.—The fight being over, and the gates ſeized by her party, the Queen came to the palace, and getting the ſilver clue, ſhe entered the bower, and in an upper room ſhe found the beauteous and Fair Roſamond, ſhining bright like an angel.

Fair Roſamond, when ſhe ſaw the angry Queen before her, trembled from head to foot, and falling on her knees, implored her mercy and pardon for her offences, and begged ſhe would forgive her for a crime ſhe was conſtrained to act, and promiſed immediately to cloiſter up herſelf in a nunnery, leave the kingdom, or do any thing elſe her majeſty required of her.

The Queen being inflexible, told her none of her excuſes would prevail; and preſenting her with a bowl of poiſon and a dagger, ſaying, You harlot, now make your choice; if your curious and dainty

palate cannot reliſh poiſon, I have got ſteel for you.

The ſorrowful Lady perceiving there was no remedy, but ſhe muſt die, ſtood upon her feet, and with abundance of tears and piteous wringing of her hands, ſhe begged mercy of God for her youthful ſins and failings, deſiring that all other ſtately beauties might be warned by her fall, not to be proud and aſpiring, but rather contented with a lowly ſafe condition: and often calling for mercy, ſhe with trembling hands put the bowl up to her mouth, and drank the poiſon, which ended her life. The Queen had her buried with the reſt that were ſlain, and ſo departed, rejoicing in the ſucceſs her revenge had on her rival, but little thought of the miſery it would pull on her own head.

The King ſoon after returned home, but had no ſooner news of this tragical end, than his great Joy was turned into mourning, and in diſtraction he rent his robes, ſhut himſelf up in a chamber, and would not ſuffer any one to ſpeak to him for many days.

When the King had a little eased his grief, he summoned his Judges, and ordered them to make a strict enquiry for those that were guilty of so heinous a crime; who fearing his displeasure, were so diligent therein, that most of them were apprehended, tried, and put to the most cruel tortures, and they accused the Queen, and laid the blame upon her, who was not able to excuse herself, for so great was the King's anger, that neither her apologies, tears, nor the intercession of his Nobles in her behalf, could appease his wrath; but she being a foreign princess her life was spared; yet the King not only for ever renounced her, but confined her for her life-time to a close imprisonment, commanding, if she died there, her body should not be buried, but lay and moulder to dust.—Nor would he forgive her at his own death (for she out-lived him, and was let at liberty after his decease by his son Richard, who succeeded him) and the Queen, as considering the hardships of imprisonment by experience, she by her own liberality, and the interest he had with her son, for the most part

ſets the priſon gates open, as well to criminals as debtors.

King Henry having thus wreaked his vengeance on the murderers of his lovely Roſamond, cauſed her body to be taken out of that obſcure grave wherein the Queen had cauſed her to be laid, and buried with all grand funeral pomp at Godſtow, in Oxfordſhire, erecting to her memory a very ſtately tomb, on which was this inſcription:

Within this tomb lies the world's chiefeſt Roſe;
She who was ſweet, will now offend the Noſe.

FINIS.